

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 4692

PASS LABOR FOR SEGALL HOROWITZ, LAZORCHICK AND QUACKENBUSH

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT ELAB VE ILO

SUBJ: VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF LABOR, JOSE MANZO GONZALEZ

REF: A GENEVA 2939, B CARACAS 2220

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF LABOR MANZO HAS A LONG HISTORY OF LEFTIST  
AFFILIATIONS AND ANTI-AMERICANISM WHICH MIGHT MAKE HIM  
UNHELPFUL TO THE US AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. END SUMMARY

1. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF LABOR JOSE  
MANZO GONZALEZ BASED LARGELY ON MATERIAL PREVIOUSLY TRANSMITTED  
IN REF B FOLLOWS:

JOSE MANZO GONZALEZ WAS SWORN IN ON FEB 24, 1976, AS  
MINISTER OF LABOR. MANZO WAS BORN ON FEB 10, 1924,  
IN CARIBE, STATE OF MONAGAS. AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL  
IN CARIBE HE WENT TO LOAW SCHOOL BEGINNING IN THE EXTERNADO DE  
COLOMBIA IN BOGOTA, THEN TRANSFERRING TO AND RECEIVING  
HIS DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ANDES IN MERIDA  
IN 1948. DURING THE PERIOD HE WAS A STUDENT MANZO BECAME  
ACTIVE IN THE PDN AND LATER IN ITS SUCCESSOR PARTY, ACCION  
DEMOCRATICA (AD). MANZO HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO THE LEFT OF THE  
MAINSTREAM OF AD AND WAS EXPELLED FROM AD IN 1947.  
AFTER THE 1948 COUP, MANZO REJOINED AD AND ROSE TO THE  
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POSITION OF NATIONAL SECRETARY OF ORGANIZATION DURING THE

PEREZ JIMENEZ DICTATORSHIP. HE WAS JAILED IN 1951. RELEASED FROM PRISON IN 1954, HE LEFT VENEZUELA AND WENT INTO EXILE IN ARGENTINA, CHILE, AND ECUADOR UNTIL PEREZ JIMENEZ WAS OVERTHROWN IN 1958, WHEN HE RETURNED TO VENEZUELA. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE AD POLITICAL COMMITTEE FROM 1958 UNTIL 1961 WHEN HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE "AD-OPPOSITION" GROUP. IN 1962 HE JOINED THE BREAK AWAY PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO NACIONAL (PRN), OF WHICH HE EVENTUALLY BECAME SECRETARY GENERAL. DURING THE 1960'S AND INTO THE 1970'S MANZO WORKED HARD TO TRY TO UNITE THE FAR LEFT, INCLUDING THE MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VENEZUELA (PCV), INTO A SINGLE OPPOSITION. HE WAS A HARSH CRITIC OF THE AD GOVT'S FIRM HANDLING OF THE GUERRILLA THREAT IN THEMID-1960'S AND ONCE CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT A MILITARY COUP IN VENEZUELA IF IT WOULD LEAD TO A REVOLUTIONARY GOVT WHICH WOULD FUNDAMENTALLY ALTER THE STRUCTURE OF VENEZUELAN SOCIETY. AS THE PRN (ALSO KNOWN AS THE PRIN WHEN IT ADDED "INTEGRATIONIST" TO ITS NAME TO UNDERLINE ITS WISH FOR A UNITED FRON ON THE FAR LEFT) BEGAN TO COLLAPSE IN THE EARLY PART OF THIS DECADE AND AS IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WOULD BE THE AD CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN THE 1973 ELECTIONS, MANZO BEGAN TO MOVE BACK TOWARD AD. HE RAN FOR THE SENATE AS AN INDEPENDENTON THE AD SLATE IN 1973. MANZO FORMALLY REINSCRIBED IN AD ABOUT A YEAR AGO. MANZO HAS FREQUENTLY SPOKEN OUT AGAINST US POLICY. HE HAS CRITICIZED BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER FOR SPEECHES WHICH HE CONSIDERS UNFRIENDLY TO RAW-MATERIAL PRODUCING COUNTRIES. PERHAPS MANZO'S REPUTATION IS BEST SUMMARIZED BY ONE OF HIS OWN LABOR INSPECTOR WHO TOLD THE LABOR ATTACHE THAT "MANZO IS A PERFECT POLITICIAN, OF EVERY TWO OR THREE WORDS HE UTTERS AT LEAST FIVE ARE LIES." MANZO WAS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BETTER ORATORS IN THE CONGRESS.

2. MANY AD PARTY REGULARS WHO WERE APPOINTED TO HIGH POSITIONS IN THE LABOR MINISTRY BY EX-MINISTER LIEDENZ ARE CONCERNED THAT MANZO WILL REPLACE THEM WITH HIS LEFTIST FRIENDS. DURING HIS FIRST TWO MONTHS IN OFFICE MANZO

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SACKED TWO OF THE SIX DIRECTORS (ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEVEL) IN THE MINISTRY, APPOINTING MORE LEFT-LEANING REPLACEMENTS. FOR EXAPMLE, THE NEW DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT HAS STATED THAT HER MAJOR TASK WILL BE THE ELIMINATION OF ALL PRIVATE PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THEMINISTRY WHO HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMBASSY WAS TRANSFERED (SHE IS A CAREER EMPLOYEE) THE FIRST DAY

MANZO WAS ON BOARD. NO REPLACEMENT HAS BEEN NAMED TO DATE. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT MANZO WILL BE LESS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD EMPLOYERS THAN HIS PREDECESSOR. WHILE IT IS MUCH TOO SOON TO JUDGE, A DYNAMIC, ELOQUENT MAVERICK LIKE MANZO WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CREAT A MINISTRY QUITE DISTINCT FROM THAT PRESIDED OVER BY CAUTIOUS, INARTICULATE, PARTY LOYALIST LEIDENZ.

3. MANZO RECEIVED THE AMBASSADOR AND THE LABOR ATTACHE VERY CORDIALLY WHEN THEY MADE THE CUSTOMARY COURTESY CALL SOON AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT. EMBASSY FILES INDICATE THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD EVER HAD WITH MANZO, AN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE IN VENEZUELA WHERE ALMOST ALL NON-COMMUNIST POLITICIANS OF ANY PROMINENCE HAVE HAD REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY OVER A PERIOD OF MANY YEARS. PRIOR TO THE COURTESY CALL AT THE MINISTRY THE LABOR ATTACHE HAD INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO MANZO ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS AND HAD GOTTEN THE IMPRESSION BOTH TIMES THAT MANZO PREFERRED NOT TO ENGAGE IN MORE THAN THE BRIEFEST GREETING.

4. COMMENT: MANZO IS A DISTINCT DEPARTURE FROM GENERALLY PRO-US OR AT LEAST NEUTRAL PREVIOUS VENEZUELAN LABOR MINISTERS. WHILE TRYING TO PREDICT HIS PERFORMANCE AS PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE OR ANY SIMILAR MEETING IS SPECULATIVE, HIS BACKGROUND MIGHT MAKE HIM UNHELPFUL TO US INTERESTS. HE WOULD BE QUITE LIKELY TO INTERPRET HIS INSTRUCTIONS IN A MANNER UNFAVORABLE TO THE US.  
SHLAUDEMAM

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